

USA Today [has an editorial today](#) that makes the case for a federal media shield law, the likes of which will be considered by the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#) this week, and has been [passed out of the House unanimously](#).

*Would the nation's wounded be better off if no one had blown the whistle on appallingly substandard outpatient conditions at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center? Would investors be better off if no one had called attention to the massive financial shenanigans at Enron? Would the nation be better off if citizens never heard of the political cesspool that was the Watergate scandals, so bad that for the first time in history a president was forced to resign in disgrace?*

*In each case, insiders who knew the difference between right and wrong but feared the consequences of going public tipped off news reporters to outrageous activities.*

*These and scores of other stories of callousness, self-dealing and corruption emerged only because the whistle-blowers were promised their names would not be made public. Nearly every state has recognized the importance of such protection, yet there is no federal law that shields reporters' ability to keep promises of confidentiality to sources. Without one, prosecutors and private lawyers too often attempt to use the federal courts to break such promises:*